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~~US~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

16 October 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(INTELLIGENCE)

SUBJECT: Tactical ELINT

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum of 6 October 1972

It has become increasingly clear in recent years that satellite systems have a role to play in the collection of tactical ELINT for ocean and battlefield surveillance. With this in mind, about one year ago, I asked the NRO Analysis Office to conduct a study of the contribution which ELINT satellites might make in supplying tactical intelligence to the national authorities as well as tactical commanders. This study was undertaken in collaboration with the DIA, with the participation of the NSA and the military services, and supported by the NRO Program Offices A and C and extensive Aerospace Corporation effort.

It was realized from the outset that a proper study should examine the trade-offs between conventional and overhead collectors, and such follow-on investigation was contemplated as a primary DIA responsibility.

The NRO study referred to above was completed in July 1972 and copies were forwarded to your office, Volume I on 11 August and Volume II on 19 September.--Our study examined in some detail the battlefield and ocean surveillance capabilities not only of current satellites, both low earth orbiters and high altitude vehicles, but advanced versions as well. While additional studies can always uncover areas for further work, I wonder whether an immediate re-examination of the same problem so soon after the completion of our own investigation is really justified.

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I will be happy to hear the report of George Steeg's visit. After that, I believe we can usefully discuss what further studies he has in mind. Perhaps the interplay of satellite and conventional systems should be examined by your office rather than by DIA.

[REDACTED]
John L. McLucas

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